

Sarah Bahr

Purples



Peer at your reflection
in the smooth skin of the eggplant
your father would never eat,
in the peppers that grew in your small garden,
in the glob of Heinz ketchup
you attempted to drown your green beans in.

Snuggle close to the threadbare fur
of the one-eyed dinosaur, whose arms
you clasped tightly around you
every night before going to sleep,
to the right head of a Dragon Tale,
a fleeting vision of the street sweeper
with the graveyard of stuffed
animals in its grill.

Clutch the wiffle ball scoop with which
you plucked the scratched plastic
ball tossed by your mother from the air;
study the swirling surface of the rubber ball
before it cleared the backyard fence

for the 19th time and splashed
once more into the middle of the lake.

Gulp the 44-ounce Fanta cherry
and blue raspberry gas station slushies
you and your sister downed
with your father's blessing,
rushing home to scrub your lips raw
and shine your stained teeth
before your mother could discover
your secret sin.

Listen to the late-night crackle
of the sizzling explosions that sliced
the sky once a year in July,
to the rustling of the glued, taped, and tied
array of streamers that dragged the street
behind the caravan of another
year's homecoming floats.

Marvel at the swirling particles
that stained the porcelain toilet bowl
after your sister learned
that vitamins don't flush;
stare transfixed at the bruise-
like beds of your nails
after another Indiana winter.

Try to see the allure of an amethyst ring
glistening in the glass case at JC Penney
when all you can think of are one-eyed
dinosaurs, eggplants, and the murders
of hundreds of thiamin lions.